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M&M GAME DAY PARTY FOODS

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Monterey Jack cheese

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5-15 minutes, these are great as
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• Choose from:
• PIZZONI
880 g/1.95 lb



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MAX SPECIAL



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Man killed in work accident



ALLAN BENNER/
ONLINE AGENCY
NIAGARA
A worker at
White Meadows
Farm was
killed in an
industrial
accident
last
Thursday
morning.
See story
on page
2.

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UPFRONT

■ INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT

Worker killed at White Meadows

ALLAN BENNER
QMI Agency Niagara

The Ministry of Labour issued 11 compliance orders against a Pelham business following a workplace fatality last Thursday morning.

Ministry spokesman William Lin said Niagara Regional Police conducted an investigation at about 16:35 a.m. Thursday to report a fatality that occurred at White Meadows Farms, 2519 Ellingham St.

The accident claimed the life of a 36-year-old man, struck by a moving concrete block at the end of a nearby gravel lane-way between 262 and 254 Roland Rd.

The identity of the man is not being released at the request of his family.

"Police learned that a concrete block had fallen off a tractor and onto a worker," Lin said. "Emergency workers attended and the worker was pronounced dead at the scene."

Lin said a ministry inspector as well as an engineer were dispatched to investigate the incident.

"Our inspector issued 11 orders to White Meadows Farm," Lin said.

Lin said several of the compliance orders, issued to resolve on-site safety concerns seen by the ministry officers during the course of their inspections, were related to "protecting workers when moving concrete blocks, and having a procedure and plan in place to remove the con-



ALLAN BENNER/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

A worker at White Meadows Farm was killed in an industrial accident last Thursday morning.

crete block."

He said other orders dealt with ensuring that the Occupational Health and Safety Act was posted for workers, providing a health and safety policy, and to provide worker training.

Lin said the compliance orders are not charges

issued under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which are determined during the course of a ministry inspection. But instead, the orders must be implemented by an employer to comply with specific legal requirements of the legislation. Failing to do so can lead

to charges.

Lin said last week it was too early to speculate on whether or not the farm will face charges as a result of the investigation.

The farm, known for its maple syrup and pancake house, issued a statement regarding the tragedy.

"As a family farm, White Meadows Farms has deep connections with our customers and staff alike," the statement reads.

"In this tragic event we have felt the tragic love of the people around us and thank everyone for their support."

"As the investigation is on

going we are giving the Ministry of Labour and the police our full co-operation."

A worker at the farm contacted last Friday said she could provide no further comment.

allan.benner@sunmedia.ca
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LOCAL NEWS

■ **FUNDRAISER:** Kinettes host spa, shopping day to support Women's Place

Pampering planned by new Fonthill club

MARYANNE FIRTH
QMI Agency Niagara

In a time when many service organizations are struggling to survive, Fonthill and District Kinette Club is moving forward fearlessly.

The newly-established group was chartered by Kin Canada in November, nearly a year after work began to bring it to fruition.

Now its 16 members are gearing up for their first-ever fundraiser — an early Valentine's Day event meant to catch the attention of women of all ages.

Pamper Me Sweet, a day of spa services and shopping, takes place Saturday, Feb. 7, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Fonthill United Church.

It will feature more than 20 vendors selling a variety of products, including tea, handmade cards, essential oils and cosmetics, as well as professionals offering various services including manicures, pedicures, massage, waxing, reflexology and makeup lessons, among others.

There will be raffle prizes, a book sale, penny sale and tea room with fresh baked goodies up for grabs.

Admission is free and services are offered for \$10 each.

Proceeds from the day will support Women's Place of South Niagara.

"We're really hoping people come out to support the event," said Betty Twomey, who is co-chairing the event with Kinette Lola Bronn.

The group, she said, felt it only fitting that its first fundraiser be geared toward women and benefit women in need.

"What better charity to choose than Women's Place?"

While the intention is to raise money for the worthy cause, the group also hopes the event will raise awareness of the club and encourage more women to get involved.

"There's no obligation. Join us for a meeting or two, help out at an event and see what we're about," said president Carolyn Steven.

There is no age restriction and women do not need to be Fonthill residents to apply.

"Maybe someone wants a night out from the toddlers. Great, we'd love to have you," Steven said.

"Maybe grandma needs a night out from the spa. Please come and join us!"

What drew Steven to the club, and she believes others as well, is Kin Canada's motto: "Serving the community's greatest need."

"We need more of that," she said.

"And we've got a fantastic group of women who want to give back. The ideas they come up with and the enthusiasm they show, it's almost awe inspiring."

Steven believes it's the people who can "make a break" a club and she's confident the future is bright for the Kinettes.

"For anyone who wants to be part of a dynamic team, we'd certainly welcome them with open arms."

Anyone interested in becoming a Kinette can e-mail FonthillKinettes@outlook.com.

Donations are being sought for the book sale at Pamper Me Sweet and can be made by calling Kinette Lola at 905-735-2993.

maryanne.firth@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: @mfirthtribune



MARYANNE FIRTH/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

The Fonthill and District Kinettes are hosting their first fundraising initiative, Pamper Me Sweet, on Saturday, Feb. 7, at Fonthill United Church. Pictured from left are event co-chairs Lola Bronn and Betty Twomey and club president Carolyn Steven.

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COMMENT

Putting the freeze on water and wastewater rates

DAVE AUGUSTYN
For PelhamNews

I am thrilled to let you know that last week town council approved another freeze on our residential and commercial water and wastewater rates.

This will be the second year of a freeze. How are we able to freeze rates when others around our cities are contemplating a 2% to 5% increase?

We invested in technology and new infrastructure. Those investments are now paying dividends.

Prior to 2010 the town measured water usage with old gallon and cubic metre odom-

eter-type wheel meters — many of which were installed when municipal water was first installed to various parts of the town in the 1960s and 1970s. Needless to say, the meters were aged and, in many cases, slow and failing. We asked residents to provide readings or hired staff to get readings every four months. That process would take months. If a resident had a leak, it could take months to detect and add significant costs.

In 2010, the town worked with Neptune Technology to replace all 4,200 of these old meters to electronic, radio frequency meters. In addition to leak detection, backflow detection, tamper detection and data logging, it takes only three to four hours for staff to drive around town and record all the usage data every two months.

Not only does this cost less and give much more accurate billing, but we also automatically notify residents and businesses by phone if there is a leak or other issue with their water service.

When we replaced all meters we found homes and businesses without meters or with manual odometers that were leaking badly. Sadly, in other cases, it appeared that some homeowners tampered with or bypassed the old meters. Now, with all the meters replaced and these issues resolved, we have reduced our water loss from 20% to less than 10%.

To read more about the success of this replacement program please read the article on my online journal at www.pelhammayor.blogspot.ca.)

As you know, we have also upgraded

significant town infrastructure over the past number of years. As we reconstructed or improved roads including Halst St., Pelham Street, Port Robinson Rd., Canboro Rd. and Church St. we also replaced old water pipes and, in some cases, sewer pipes. Over the past eight years, we replaced more than 12 miles of old water pipes. This has helped stop costly leaks and significantly reduce the number of breaks and repairs.

On behalf of council, I am pleased that our investments in technology and new infrastructure are now paying dividend and allowing us to freeze your water and sewer rates for a second year.

You may contact Mayor Dave at mayordave@pelham.ca or read past columns at www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.com.

Shipwrecks – Atlantic Erie

SKIP GILLHAM
For QMI Agency, Niagara

Atlantic Erie, a frequent trader through the Welland Canal, ran aground early this year off île-des-Madelaine in the St. Lawrence River.

The ship was departing with a cargo of road salt on Jan. 11, 2015, when it stranded.

Fortunately, the vessel was not damaged and was pulled free by tugs at high tide.

Following an inspection, the ship was able to continue its journey to deliver much needed winter road salt.

Atlantic Erie was built at Collingwood and entered service in April 1985 for Canada Steamship Lines as the *Hor. Paul Martin*. This self-unloader was capable of Great Lakes as well as ocean service and often spent the winter months in saltwater service.

The name was changed to *Atlantic Erie* in 1988 and it spent considerable time in the gypsum trade along the Atlantic coast. It has also worked on the Pacific and overseas to Germany and Holland.

On June 12, 2014, *Atlantic Erie* went aground off Port Colborne but was lightened and released on this occasion as well.



Atlantic Erie is shown in this undated photo.

LOCAL NEWS

■ **TOURISM:** Website, video launched to attract riders to Niagara

Peddling region to cycling tourists

DAN DAKIN
QMI Agency Niagara

Venture Niagara has put the wheels in motion to get more cyclists visiting Niagara.

After hiring a cycling tourism co-ordinator last year, the publicly funded economic development agency has launched a new website and promotional video, and is planning to open a cycle-tourism office to help bring more visitors to Niagara.

The four-minute-long video, produced by JLM Studio of St. Catharines, features cyclists riding the bike paths, trails and roads around the region, and then taking in some of the sites such as wineries and Niagara Falls.

Nearly every municipality is represented in the video, while Venture Niagara community and economic development manager Sue Morin said was one of the big goals when filming started last summer.

"I was pretty well blown away when I saw the finished product. It was exactly what I had dreamed up, but I didn't know if it was possible," she said.

Filming took place over three months using volunteer cyclists covering various areas and locations.

At a launch event in St. Catharines last Thursday morning, Morin said research conducted over the past year showed cycling tourists coming to Niagara stay an average of about three nights and spend more than \$1,000.



Four cyclists ride a pair of tandem bicycles on a bike path in Niagara.

JERRY MARCH/ILM STUDIO, SPECIAL TO QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Venture Niagara compared the region to some of the world's top cycling destinations such as Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Portland, Tokyo, Montreal and Melbourne to find out what the region could be doing better.

"In some of these places, cars are No. 2 behind bicycles," Morin said.

The Niagara Cycle Tourism Centre came as a result of that research. Located at Venture Niagara's Pine St. office in Thorold, the NCTC will act as a central hub for incoming cyclists looking for information.

While funding for the cycling tourism co-ordinator position, the new website and promotional video came from the Ministry of Train-

ing, Colleges and Universities, Venture Niagara found out Wednesday it has received around \$77,000 worth of funding through FedDev Ontario to run the cycle tourism centre until March 2016.

Cycling legend Steve Bauer, as well as local cycling advocates, will be on hand to help with the launch of the centre.

who grew up in Fenwick and went on to win a cycling silver at the Olympics and wore the yellow jersey in the Tour de France, said Thursday the website is smart move.

"This is been a long on the infrastructure for years. It's nicer to cycle in Niagara than ever before with bike lane improvements. This is another big step forward to have this collaboration," he said.

The website has information for cyclists looking to come to Niagara including a wide variety of bike routes that can be downloaded to a bike computer, information on where to find bike friendly food and lodging options, what the local cycling clubs and teams are, and where to go for washrooms or bike repairs.

Bauer said the site and video will help promote the lesser known destinations.

"Most people think of Niagara as being Niagara Falls or Niagara-on-the-Lake for a destination, but there's so much more worth that's pretty exciting," he said.

Asked what needs to happen next to improve cycling in the region, Morin said she would like to see more standardized signs used for bike routes.

"Yes, keep up the good work with the roads, but we need to have one big message in Niagara with signage," she said.

To see the new website, visit www.niagaracyclingtourism.com.

Kevin Robins

Kevin's practice is largely in the area of Family Law. He provides services in the areas of divorce, separation, separation, marriage and cohabitation agreements. He has extensive experience in custody and access disputes, property division and child and spousal support issues. He is a member of the Niagara Collaborative Law Group which is an alternative method of resolving disputes as opposed to traditional adversarial methods.



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LOCAL NEWS

■ POLICING: Petrowski wins seat as vice-chair

Gale elected police board chair

BILL SAWCHUK
QMJ Agency Niagara

Bob Gale has come full circle.

As a young man, he served as a constable with the Niagara Regional Police. Thirty years later, after leaving to forge a successful career in the family fuel business, he is back with the NRP — this time, as chairman of the police services board.

Gale was elected as the chair by a vote of 4-3 at Thursday's first meeting of the new board.

"I'm pretty proud to be here," Gale said. "I've gone from constable to chairman of the board. I am looking forward to it. We are here to achieve a purpose.

"I understand we can't get involved

CRIME UPDATE

Niagara Regional Police Chief Jeff McGuire gave the police services board a rundown of crime in Niagara. He told the board there were three homicides in Niagara in 2014. One remains unsolved. There were 13 deadly collisions involving 20 fatalities for the year.

McGuire told the board there were 24 robberies in December. Ten have been cleared.

in operations, but these are our tax dollars and I want to know where they go.

Andy Petrowski was elected vice-chair by the same 4-3 vote. Both are rookies on the board.

Board veteran Vaughn Stewart also ran for chair. Another veteran, Ken Gansel, put his



ANDY
PETROWSKI



BOB
GALE

meeting.

"That's democracy."

The police services board is the civilian body that oversees the NRP and is responsible for the budget.

Gale said he would strive for transparency, honesty and integrity and emphasized the board will be fiscally responsible for the taxpayers, which was something Petrowski reiterated.

Gale said there is a lot of public interest in the police service and the board.

"I have already had questions from people about bad cops," Gale said. "I hate bad cops. The rank and file is stained by bad cops. There aren't many, but we have to weed them out."

"I hate like heck when an officer is still getting paid after they have been charged with a serious crime. You can't blame the chief, because we are gov-

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

The new members of the police services board wasted no time peppering the chief and his staff with questions Thursday.

Many were about board procedures and protocol. Others weren't.

Andy Petrowski left no doubt he wants body cameras on all officers, and Dave Barrick questioned the use of a discretionary fund is spent. Board chair Bob Gale wondered about the relationship between the board and the Niagara District Board of Niagara in light of a bomb threat at Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School earlier this month. He wanted to know what schools are doing to avoid copycats.

And Terry Bonham, a Stelco operations management retiree who has experience working in a large, unionized environment, warned the board he had about 500 questions about police overtime procedures.

erned by legislation, but let's work together and get some answers."

Petrowski said he takes his new role seriously.

"I believe in a fair wage for the police service, but it has to be balanced against the challenging economic times in the Niagara region."

Petrowski said he has three stepsons who are police officers.

"I'm very mindful of the risks they put themselves through," he said. "They are in my prayers every day."

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RECREATION PROGRAMS & CLASSES

Zumba Classes @ Pelham Arena:

Tuesday, February 3	9:30 – 10:30am	Wednesday, February 4	7:30p – 8:30pm
Tuesday, February 3	Cancelled	Thursday, February 5	10:00 – 11:00am

Walking Club – Everyone is welcome! – February 3 & 5

Interested in joining a Walking Club? Then join ours! Tuesdays at Pelham Arena from 9–10am and Thursdays at Fonthill Bandshell from 9–10:30am. For more information, please contact (905) 892-2607 ext. 329.

Improv Classes – NOW AVAILABLE! Contact jhendriks@pelham.ca or call 905-892-2607 ext. 341 for more details.

Ballroom Dance Lessons – Classes are underway, but space is still available on Mondays from 8–9pm! Contact jook@pelham.ca or call 905-892-2607 ext. 329.

Arena Programs

Public Skating	Adult Public Skating	Adult/Preschool	Men's Shiny Hockey	Women's Shiny Hockey	Women's Learn to Play Hockey	Hockey Skills Hour	Pelham Panthers Home Games
Friday Jan 30 4:00 – 5:00 pm	Friday Jan 30 10:00 – 11:00am	Friday Jan 30 10:00 – 11:00 am	Friday Jan 30 9:00 – 10:00 am	Monday Feb 2 9:30 – 10:45 am	Thursday Feb 5 9:30 – 10:30 am	Monday Feb 2 11 am – 12 pm	Friday Feb 6 vs. Buffalo
Friday Jan 30 8:00 – 9:30 pm	Thursday Feb 5 1:00 – 2:00pm	Tuesday Feb 3 1:00 – 2:00 pm	Tuesday Feb 3 8:00 – 9:00 am	Thursday Feb 5 10:30 – 11:45 am		Thursday Feb 5 2:00 – 3:00 pm	
Tuesday Feb 3 7:30 – 8:30 pm							

Summer Student Jobs

Calling all students (who are between the ages of 15-30 and returning to school in September 2015)! The Town of Pelham is accepting resumes for a number of exciting summer opportunities! Visit pelham.ca/career-opportunities for more details & please remember to apply for all the positions you may be interested in. Deadline is Friday, January 30, 2015.

Building Inspector II

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Fenwick Commemorative Bricks



The Village of Fenwick celebrated its 160th Anniversary in June 2013. Now you have the opportunity to be a part of Fenwick's future. Purchase a granite brick to be incorporated into the downtown Fenwick Beautification Project. Standard, double, veteran's and corporate bricks are available. Visit pelham.ca for details or come in to Town Hall (20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill).

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For more info, contact Jodi Hendriks at jhendriks@pelham.ca or (905) 892-2607 ext. 341.

This production is made possible with the help of our generous sponsors Pleasantview Funeral Home and James L. Pedlar Funeral Home.

LOCAL NEWS

■ MENTAL HEALTH: Author relates his struggles with addictions and self-image

'Take charge of your own recovery'



GRANT LAFLECHE
QMI Agency Niagara

Alcoholics call it the moment of clarity. That sudden instant of self-awareness and realization when one can see a path out of turbulent waters.

For American Brian Cuban, it came sitting in a car outside a psychiatric hospital.

The previous days of his life had been erased by booze.

He had been there before. Cuban's life had spun out of control. Body image and self-esteem issues as a boy triggered serious eating disorders.

Presently, he would follow, as did his doctors, to cocaine and alcohol. His own demons drove him to the brink of suicide.

"So was sitting in the parking lot of this hospital. It was the second time I had been there. I was thinking to myself that unless something changes, unless I got help, there wouldn't be a third trip," Cuban said in an interview Wednesday.

"I wouldn't survive."

Cuban, the author of *Shattered Image: My Triumph Over Body Dysmorphic Disorders*, was in St. Catharines last Thursday evening to talk about his struggles with mental health and addictions issues.

He spoke at a mental health event at the Holiday Inn Parkway on Ontario St. focused on dispelling the stigma that so often shrouds mental health issues.

"Talking about it is part of my own recovery, which I have to live with every day. Every day, it's a process," said Cuban, the younger brother of Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban.

"I'm not a doctor, OK, but if I can reach just one person, help

LEARN MORE

More information on Cuban can be found at www.facebook.com/ShatteredImageBook

just one person get help they need, then travelling and talking about it was completely worth it."

Much of what Cuban talks about is aimed at dispelling the stigma that still surrounds the discussion of mental health in the public realm.

He knows about that stigma first hand.

For years, he suffered through body dysmorphic disorder — a condition that made him to develop unhealthy body and self-image problems — which eventually manifested as eating disorders.

Culturally, however, both body dysmorphic and eating disorders are generally associated with girls and young women, not boys and men. The very idea of admitting to anyone he suffered from both was unthinkable for a long time.

"I told no one. Not even my family. Not even my therapist for a long time," he said.

"At the time, I would rather admit I was a drug addict and an alcoholic than admit I had an eating disorder because of the shame. Because men are supposed to be strong and not have to deal with that sort of thing. So you don't say anything."

But men are impacted by these conditions, and cannot get help for them unless they are willing to talk about it.

"Every time I do a talk, some-

one — men and women — will come and talk to me. Sometimes I have a good cry with them; he said.

"And they will often tell me they can't talk to anyone. And I ask them, 'Who do you love?' Talk to even one person that you love."

"Sometimes all you need is to be willing to put down your wall, even for just one second, and say to someone to get you some help," said Cuban.

Growing up, his mother constantly told him he was overweight. That he ate too much and was a "fat pig." It was a message that lodged in Cuban's mind and never really let go.

"I don't blame my mother," he said. "What she was saying to me was what she had been taught from her mother."

The damage, however, was done.

Whenever he looked in the mirror, no matter his weight, Cuban saw an ugly, obese person looking back at him. He developed both anorexia and bulimia.

As he got older, his psychological self-image grew progressively worse. He coped by self-medication with cocaine and alcohol. By the time he was 44, he nearly ended his own life and might well have gone through with it if he had not sought help.

"The bottom line is you have to take charge of your own recovery," he said, now eight years past that day in the parking lot of the hospital.

"You have to be active about it. It is a process, and some days you will have setbacks. But you people have to start over. That is OK."



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LOCAL NEWS

■ COMMUNITY

Walkers raise \$65,000 to help fight against Alzheimer's disease

GRANT LAFLECHE
QMI Agency Niagara

More than 300 walkers made their way around Brock University Sunday afternoon for the 11th annual Walk for Memories event, to support the Niagara chapter of the Alzheimer's Society.

It raised \$65,000, and chapter CEO Teena Kindt said a few thousand more dollars was expected to come in through a penny sale and other events at the university Sunday.

"So I think we'll end up breaking \$70,000," she predicted.

Walkers collected pledges for the event, which saw them navigate a figure 8 route through the university.

According to Alzheimer Society statistics, more than 8,600 Niagara residents are suffering from progressive dementia, the most common of which is Alzheimer's disease.

Kindt said the society is trying to drive the message that 72% of people with Alzheimer's are women, principally because they live longer than men.

In 70% of families, women are the caregivers, so if they fall prey to the disease it can seriously disrupt the family unit, Kindt said.

"So we are really focused on talking to women in their 40s to be aware of the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease," he said.

The society had aimed to

raise \$75,000 for this year's walk, but more people will be invited online.

"Our website for the walk will be open until early February," Kindt said.

The Niagara chapter must raise about \$500,000 annually to keep its programming at its current level.

Although 65% of the funding it gets comes from government sources, Kindt said the society has seen a steady increase in that assistance for three years. So it must raise the rest, including raising money to cover rising expenses.

For more information or to donate, visit www.walkformemories.ca.

grant.lafleche@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: @grantlafleche



GRANT LAFLECHE / QMI AGENCY NIAGARA
Walkers at Brock University raised \$65,000 for the Alzheimer Society Niagara chapter Sunday at the 11th annual Walk for Memories.

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LOCAL NEWS

■ POLICING: To be broadcast live on Tribune website

Chat with the Chief online



JULIE JOSCA / QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Niagara Regional Police Chief Jeff McGuire, shown in this file photo, will take part in a monthly webcast with QMI Agency Niagara to discuss policing issues and answer citizens' questions.

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"Everybody cares about policing — and if they don't, they should," said Erica Bajer, managing editor of *The Standard* in St. Catharines. "Most people don't actually have an

interaction with the police, but we want to know they are there."

"People care about the way the budget is spent, the way officers are deployed in the community and what things they spend their time on."

The show will provide a forum to ask the chief the questions you have about policing in Niagara.

"We want to communicate with the public that we serve, and give them the opportunity to ask questions and provide input," McGuire said. "It gives me the opportunity to explain to them in mass about some of the things we do and some of the things we can't do."

Chat with the Chief will be webcast on wellandtribune.com.

Questions and comments can be submitted on Twitter using the hashtag #AskMcGuire. The show will take place monthly.

"We wanted to give readers another way to get information about policing," Bajer said.

"This gives them access to the chief through us. It's another way to engage with our readers. We've been successful with our online broadcasts — the election debates, our poverty discussions and the Adoptables — and this is another way to build on that."

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Parent files new complaint against DSBN

DON FRASER
OMA Agency Niagara

A Grimsby man is again taking on District School Board of Niagara over its perceived religious connections.

In November 2013 — his second action against the board — René Chouinard filed an Ontario Human Rights Code complaint arguing the board “continues to exhibit preferences for Protestant Christianity” at its facilities, to the exclusion of other creeds and religious schools.

He said the most obvious example is Eden High School in St. Catharines and its Protestantism.

The complaint said the board has “continued to allow other missionary organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, to operate Christian mission activities within its programs.”

In his first action Chouinard, an atheist, successfully took the board to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario for allowing distribution of rell-

igious materials in its schools. In August 2013, the DSBN was ordered to stop allowing distribution of third-party religious materials in schools unless it developed a new, non-discriminatory policy for all creeds, including atheists.

The tribunal said a DSBN revised policy did not treat all creeds fairly and ensure neutrality and non-discrimination.

The board has complied with that order and no longer allows such distributions in its schools.

On Monday, a hearing on the most recent complaint was held before the tribunal in St. Catharines.

The tribunal adjourned to rule that the wife of Chouinard's son — whether she or he has the right to take the complaint to tribunal.

That written decision is expected to be made shortly.

In an interview afterward, Chouinard said he was “a little surprised that the issue of standing required as much

discussion as it did.”

“I have a kid in one of those schools,” he said.

In describing its effect on him, Chouinard writes in his complaint the board's activities exposed him to abuse and “character assassination in the local media and community.”

Among other effects, he alleged that his three children in that they have perceived Christianity as the norm in DSBN schools, and that “concepts of non-belief were not respected.”

He is seeking \$50,000 in compensation from the school board to run a long-term media campaign promoting the validity of secular humanism.

His non-monetary remedy, among a number of demands, is to have Eden disbanded and either rebranded as a secular facility or closed.

Chouinard also requests the DSBN discontinue its DSBN (International) home building program activities with

Habitat, unless it can show it's engaged in similar activities with secular humanist organ-

izations.

On its website, Eden High School describes its privately

funded Spiritual Life Centre as providing a “meaningful program to assist in the development and support of Eden's students ... through a rich array of life activities.”

That centre describes its mandate as “leading students to learn of Christ and live for Christ.”

Through its lawyer, the board states in its response Eden is compliant with ministry regulations on religious instruction being extracurricular and outside the instructional day.

Students also choose whether or not to go to Eden, which has no geographical catchment area.

It is up to a student's choice whether to attend chapel or utilize life centre services, which is privately funded and compliant under the Education Act.

DSBN said its affiliation with Habitat for Humanity is not religious nor missionary in nature, but educational.

The reply maintains the DSBN neither supports nor objects to any specific creed.



JULIE JOCSAK/OMA AGENCY NIAGARA

Rene Chouinard, shown with his wife Anna, has filed a complaint against the District School Board of Niagara.

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■ CASINOS: Mayor betting alcohol will attract gamblers

Diodati urges free booze

QMI Agency Niagara

Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati says it's time to open the free taps at Ontario casinos, especially those in border cities.

Facing declining attendance and profits, he says casinos need to offer complimentary alcohol to patrons to combat staff U.S. competition.

"We're getting beat at our own game," said Diodati, pointing to the fact Seneca Niagara Casino in Niagara Falls, N.Y., is luring a large number of Canadian gamblers by offering free alcohol along with smoking.

It's a view Diodati has long held. He repeated it with CTV news last week for a report on Ontario's struggling casinos. According to the three-minute segment, attendance at Ontario's casinos dropped to 13,943,101 in 2014 from 16,717,060 in 2010, while total revenue has decreased

\$101 million during the same period.

"There are solutions to our problems, but you cannot be afraid to fail," says Diodati. "Doing nothing is not a solution. This is not a time to turtle."

Cities like Las Vegas and Atlantic City have long lured gamblers with free alcohol, but it is also offered at the Seneca Niagara Casino.

"While you are gaming at Seneca Niagara Casino and Hotel, all beverages are free while playing any slot machine or table game available at no cost to you," it states on the casino's General FAQs web page.

A similar page on the Niagara Falls Caesars' website also states "due to government regulations it is against the law to serve complimentary alcohol in Canada."

With the launch of legalized online gambling in Ontario and this week's announce-



Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati says the province needs to change its regulations and allow free alcohol at Ontario casinos to boost profit and attendance.

ment of 28 layoffs at Caesars Windsor, Diodati stresses "there's a price to standing still." If Niagara's casinos cannot offer the amenities patrons want, like free alcohol, they will continue to lose ground.

"We talk about one-armed bandits ... well, (the province) is asking us to compete with one arm tied behind the back."

He's confident the province sees the "trajectory of gaming" in Ontario, and will make changes soon. In Niagara Falls, he hopes that increases a 5,000 to 7,000 seat theatre to allow everyone — not just

casino patrons — a chance to see big concerts.

Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates concurs. With the price of gas well under \$1 a litre

and the loonie at a five-year low, it's a prime time to attract Americans to our casinos again, he says.

He'd also like to see the

19-year-old Casino Niagara completely revamped, and the Slots at Fort Erie Race track re-opened.

"All these things, including free alcohol in the casinos, have to be looked at," he says. "But we have to make sure there are programs in place to help people if that becomes an issue."

Greg Medulin, director of communications for Fallsview Casino and Casino Niagara, says: "Being able to provide complimentary alcohol would certainly eliminate one of the competitive variables that we have with the neighbouring U.S. casinos, but a 5,000- to 7,000-seat entertainment centre is the amenity that we are after."

"A new entertainment centre attached to Fallsview Casino would transform our business."

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LOCAL NEWS

■ AGING

Pacemaker rejuvenates 105-year-old

ALLAN BENNER
QMI Agency Niagara

She has a look of anticipation in her bright eyes as her caregiver hands her a Hohner accordion, tarnished with age.

Elena Turroni smiles as her nimble fingers easily pick out the notes on the antique instrument.

A cheerful old tune rings from the accordion. The finish has faded in the 80 years Turroni has owned it, but the sounds it produces are vibrant.

She said her father, Tommaso DiMartile, taught her to play the instrument when she was eight years old.

She smiles as she recalls sitting at her father's side, watching him play.

She had a small accordion at the time, just big enough for a child. And she'd try to follow what her father played, learning to play the accordion herself in the process.

That was in 1918, and she's been entertaining friends and family, playing the accordion, ever since.

Turroni was born in Welland on Jan. 20, 1910. Yes, she's 105.

Recently — after all its many years of faithfully beating in her chest — her big, caring heart finally began to slow down.

Her grandson, Mike Belcastro, said Turroni's family became concerned when they noticed that she was tiring quickly and lacked the strength to do the things she has always enjoyed.

"She was in the hospital awhile ago and we couldn't figure out what was wrong with her heart," he said.

He frequently had slowed to about 30 beats per minute. It should be about 150. About four times a day, it stopped entirely for a second or so at a time.

After conducting tests, Turroni's cardiologist, Dr. Robert Mackett, told her he could see no reason why she shouldn't have a pacemaker.

"Everyone thought her health was good enough for that," Belcastro said, adding Mackett, who performed the

procedure, is "an amazing person."

"He walked me through the procedure a few times to make sure that I was comfortable with it," Belcastro said.

Turroni arrived at the St. Catharines hospital at 10 a.m. on Dec. 12 at about 10:30 a.m. to have the procedure done an hour later.

By about 5:30 p.m. that day, Turroni was back in her Welland home.

It was the first time Turroni had ever seen the new St. Catharines hospital, which opened in March, 2013. Despite her age, Belcastro said his grandmother is normally healthy enough that she doesn't need to spend much time in the hospital.

Belcastro said Mackett told him she was the oldest patient he knows of in the country who has had a pacemaker implanted.

While Turroni might be the oldest Canadian with a pacemaker, she's not the oldest in the world to have the procedure done.

Jean Antoniou, a spokesperson for the Government of Canada's North America office in New York City, said the current record-holder for the oldest person fitted with a pacemaker is David Henderon of Laurence-Kirk, Kincardineshire, Scotland.

He was 107 years old when he had a pacemaker fitted in 1997," Antoniou wrote in an e-mail.

Dr. Stafford Dobbin from Heart Niagara said having a pacemaker at Turroni's age is rare "only because a limited number of the population reach 105."

"I think Dr. Mackett is to be congratulated for seeing that age need not be a limiting factor for treating heart disease," Dobbin added.

"The older you get, there's an increased risk of everything, but Dr. Mackett quite rightly did not regard age as something that would hold him back from treating something the way they should be treated."

Since the procedure, Belcastro said he's noticed a renewed strength, Turroni would still



Elena Turroni, 105, gets a kiss on the cheek from her grandson Mike Belcastro, celebrating her 105th birthday.

mother.

"She's driving her caregiver nuts because she doesn't want to go to bed at 9 p.m. anymore, she's up until two o'clock in the morning."

Turroni wants to go out shopping and visit friends and relatives — things she didn't have the strength to do before.

"She wants to go out to the mall everyday," added Belcastro, president of the nearby Seaway Mall.

That renewed energy is a common result of having a pacemaker implanted, regardless of the patient's age, Dobbin explained.

"Any one who has a pulse deficit is going to feel lousy, and an implant will probably be the obvious way to go," he said. "Once the pacemaker has been inserted, people obviously feel a great deal better."

"If everybody was able to look after themselves properly from adolescence on, many more people would live to 105."

Asked how she feels after the procedure, Turroni replied, "I'm old," she added, smiling.

Although the pacemaker has given her renewed strength, Turroni would still

prefer to be more active than she is.

"I can't be active because both my legs are gone," she complained.

Arthritis makes it too painful to get around like she used to, Belcastro explained.

But Turroni wants to go dancing again, she said, along with her late husband, Sam.

"I used to have fun. I loved dancing, playing my accordion," she recalled.

Turroni, who raised three daughters in Welland, still has many cousins, nieces and nephews living in the city, including Welland Ward 4 Coun. Pat Chiochetti, her great-nephew, who congratulated Turroni on her birthday during Tuesday's Welland city council meeting.

Most of Turroni's descendants, however, have since moved all over North America, now living in Toronto, Windsor, Calgary, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Belcastro is the only one of Turroni's six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren still living in Welland.

Nevertheless, she said her nieces and nephews keep her busy, such as Mary Mollica, who stopped by to visit Turroni Monday for an early birthday celebration.

The two women were char-

ter members of Regina Lodge No. 20, Welland's chapter of the Order of the Sons of Italy.

"On May 1965, at the Barclay Hotel we received our charter," Mollica recalled, referring to a long gone establishment in the city.

Turroni was already 55 years old at that time, while Mollica was 35.

Mollica told Turroni she looks far younger than her birth certificate would suggest.

Turroni said and smiled: "I never wore makeup. No lipstick. Nothing."

With the help of Pheobe Batalao, her live-in caregiver, Turroni still lives relatively independently in her Welland home, though she uses a wheelchair and oil paintings she's created over the years. Most of the paintings are images of landscapes and the familiar faces of her loved ones.

"I used to do a lot of painting," she said, although she hasn't picked up her paintbrush recently.

She still loves to cook.

Turroni spent much of her long life as a chef, running a busy restaurant as well as sharing her talents with viewers of a local television cooking show. And about 15 years ago she was featured on an episode of the *Loving Spoons*

television program.

She's also published numerous cookbooks.

Even now, she still prepares her own meals.

"Oh, I throw something together," she said when asked about her latest cooking.

Belcastro recalled a recent visit from family members from Los Angeles.

"My cousins had never made gnocchi with ricotta. I told them how to make it," he said.

While they were preparing the pasta, Turroni asked, "What are you doing?"

"She started showing them how to make it," Belcastro explained. "You have to roll out the dough and then they couldn't do it, so she did."

"My cousins were in shock. They weren't expecting that."

Turroni said she still loves pasta, especially with garlic and olive oil rather than marinara sauce. And a healthy diet of good Italian food, she speculated, might have helped her remain healthy for such a long time.

Now, Turroni's family is wondering if she might outlive her grandchildren.

Belcastro recalled a recent telephone conversation with his cousin.

"He called me and said, 'I was at the lawyer's today.'

"I asked, 'Why?'"

"He said, 'The same reason you should go.'

"I said, 'What happened?'"

"He said, 'Oh, I put Grandpa in my will.'"

Monday, as her friends celebrated her birthday, Turroni was asked what she wished for after she blew out the five candles on her cake.

"I wished that everybody will be happy and still love me the way they used to," she replied.

While it's supposed to be bad luck to share your birthday wish, Mollica told her old friend she has nothing to worry about.

"Your wish has been granted," Mollica said.

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MUSIC: Welland's Ashlynne Vince

Rising star takes aim at American top 40 pop chart

JOHN LAW

QMI Agency Niagara

It's a Wednesday morning and the first question for Ashlynne Vince is ... isn't this a school day?

But Welland teen laughs and says yes, she'll be returning to Welland Centennial Secondary School next month. But she's hardly been truant. While setting the stage for pop stardom these past few months in Nashville she's been taking online courses to keep up.

In between geography and English she's juggling studio time, songwriting and photo shoots. And that last one is proving problematic this week. With last Thursday's release of her single *Hold On to Love*, her manager is trying to have new publicity photos ready. Which probably wasn't the best time to get a soccer ball to the face.

Sometimes, being a teen gets in the way of a teen singer.

"It was really bad," she says. "I had a big goose egg on my chin."

If her hunch pays off, there

won't be time for soccer soon. Or much of anything else. Hold on to Love, a vaguely '90s-ish pop song, will be her formal introduction to top 40 stations across the U.S. With a big push by her management at Plateau Music, the polished track is everything her career has been building towards.

All five years of it.

"When she turned 16, her birthday print was flying out to Nashville," says mom Loralee Vince. "She said to me, 'I had the bug too. She's always been involved in music and puts her heart in it. I can get behind anyone who puts the effort in.'

When she was 12, Ashlynne took the stage at Fonthill's Urban Steakhouse for open-mic night, singing Tom Petty's *Free Fallin'* and Carrie Underwood's *Before He Cheats*. Her family already knew she could sing, but they weren't expecting every time she's on stage.

"Every time she's on stage, whether it's at The Urban or downtown Nashville, everyone stops what they're doing and goes, 'Who's that singing?'"

She returned most every weekend, eventually catching the eye of a local talent master who wanted her to star in a Taylor Swift tribute show. While crooning *Fifteen* and *Dear John*, she was also busy writing her own country songs. It paid off in 2011 when she won rising star at the Niagara Music Awards.

At 16, she made eight trips to Nashville, recording her debut CD *Tidal Wave* at CTM



Welland's Ashlynne Vince makes her play for pop stardom with the release of her single *Hold On To Love* on 104.0 radio. The teen recently returned from an internship at a Nashville music studio.

JOHN LAW/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Studios. It was there she was spotted by studio engineer Reckha Singh, who bent the ear of Tennessee music stable Plateau Music.

The company already had a proven track record with young stars such as Sam Austin and Bobby Brooks Wilson. In Vince, CEO/executive producer Tony Mantor saw a teen star in the making.

But Vince knew one thing had to change: Country songs.

Besides the inevitable comparisons to Taylor Swift, her heart was set on pop.

"People can say, 'You're not country enough, but they can't say, 'You're not pop enough.'"

In August, she left for Nashville with her mom, sister and dog for a four-month internship at music studio The Tracking Room. While her friends were back at school, she was getting a different kind of education.

"When I go to a concert and I see people singing the words to a performer's stuff, it just makes me want to be on stage looking out to a crowd," she says. "Getting the satisfaction of them just knowing my stuff. That's what's pushing me ... that would be the best ... in the world."

Facing a possible career-making week, mom Loralee is keeping her closer than ever. She has seen enough of the music world's "sleazy side."

"She doesn't go anywhere unless I'm with her," she says. "I handle all her e-mails. But we're really comfortable with Tony Mantor ... he's not just a manager, he's helping to develop all aspects of the business."

"I'm really confident in Ashlynne's choices because she's always been level headed ("She's my best friend," intersects Ashlynn). She's aware of the pitfalls and dangers."

"We've watched Miley Cyrus go through her phases and we've talked about it a lot."

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